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Metro & New Mexico

Downtown Superfund Site Input Wanted

BY DAN MCKAY
Journal Staff Writer

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants residents to review an \$11.8 million plan to clean up contaminated soil and ground water in Downtown Albuquerque.

The EPA and New Mexico Environment Department have scheduled a public meeting Tuesday to discuss the Fruit Avenue Superfund site, a plume of possibly carcinogenic solvents that lies beneath a chunk of Downtown. About 320 million gallons of ground water are contaminated, according to EPA estimates.

No city wells have been affected, city officials say.

"We're very interested in hearing the community's concerns and comments on our plan of action," said Greg Lyssy, EPA's manager for the project.

Old dry-cleaning businesses at Third and Roma NW are believed to be the source of contamination. High levels of trichloroethene — or TCE, a chlorinated solvent — have been found in the ground water.

If no action is taken, computer models

suggest, the contamination could threaten the municipal water supply within five to 20 years, Lyssy said.

"The problem we're dealing with now happened decades ago," Mayor Jim Baca said. "We have to clean it up."

He said he had not reviewed the EPA's cleanup plans.

The agency proposes attacking the source of contamination and "hot spot" areas by injecting them with a chemical oxidant or a "bioremediation additive" — which Lyssy described as similar to fertilizer — to treat the contaminants.

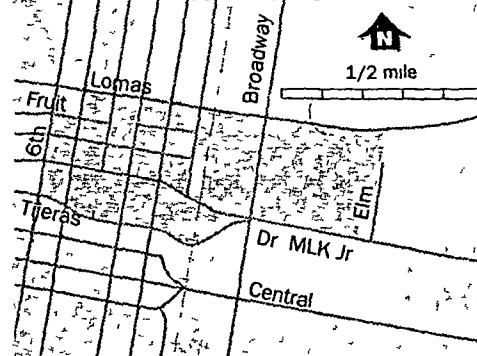
Also, the agency wants to pump out contaminated ground water, run it through a nearby treatment plant and inject it back into the aquifer.

The plan would cost about \$11.4 million.

A treatment plant and wells would have to be constructed in the area — though Lyssy said sites haven't been selected. The start of construction is at least a year away, he said.

The agency also proposes spending \$390,000 to extract contamination from the soil. The soil is capped by an asphalt parking lot, and it's safe for people above

FRUIT AVENUE PLUME SUPERFUND SITE



CAROL COOPERRIDER / JOURNAL

Cleanup discussion

The Environmental Protection Agency and the New Mexico Environment Department will discuss their cleanup plans at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the South Broadway Cultural Center, 1025 Broadway SE.

ground, according to the EPA.

Federal funds would cover 90 percent of the cleanup costs. The rest would come from the state.

"It's a very old site, and it's been a problem for a while," said Mary Lou Leonard, who manages Albuquerque's environmental services division. "The good thing is

See **SUPERFUND** on **PAGE E2**

Man Accused Of Shooting Woman's Dog

Pet killed while sleeping on bed with suspect's girlfriend

RENATA D'ALIESIO
Journal Staff Writer

Erica McGuire was sleeping on her bed with her basset hound when her boyfriend awoke her around 4 a.m. Thursday and allegedly tried to kill her, firing nine bullets into her bedroom in a Northeast Albuquerque home, a police report says.

Miraculously, McGuire was not hurt. Her dog, though, wasn't as lucky, dying on her bed, a pool of blood surrounding it when Albuquerque police officers arrived, a criminal complaint says.

A few hours later, McGuire's boyfriend, George Clifton Williams, 34, was in custody, booked on charges of attempted murder, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, cruelty to animals and kidnapping.

He was being held Friday in the Bernalillo County Detention Center on a \$50,000 cash-only bond.

According to the criminal complaint, an argument between McGuire and Williams

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DEAN HANSON/JOURNAL

CHECKING CARS:Law enforcement officers check vehicle identification numbers on cars parked at a towing company lot Friday morning. From left are John Sides of the New Mexico State Police; Albuquerque Police Department Sgt. Joe Byers and Bill Webb of the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office.

town easy

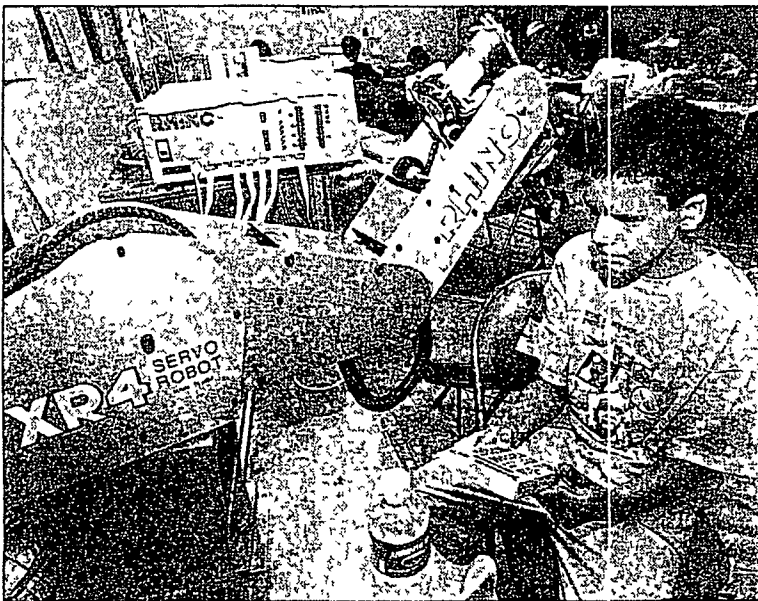
In 1999, national crime statistics show that Albuquerque ranked sixth among cities for reports of stolen vehicles, a ranking that fell to 13th last year

Byers and law officers hope that spot raids, such as Friday's, could become a deterrent for auto theft and, subsequently, move Albuquerque off the Top 25 list for stolen vehicle reports

Longoria said the random inspections can work toward reducing car theft Police statistics show that 291 vehicles were reported stolen during May, a 27 percent drop from the 397 reported in taken during the same time last year

"They're slowly running out of places to put their cars," Longoria said

ROBOT CHECK



ROBERTO E. ROSALES/JOURNAL

Twelve-year-old Ian Harrison of Studio City, Calif., tests a robotic arm Friday at the National Atomic Museum at Kirtland Air Force Base. Harrison learned to program the robot at a summer camp called Science is Everywhere, which runs until Aug. 10.

Superfund Site Input Wanted

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we're taking a proactive step to make sure we address it before it reaches any city wells "

The agency's proposed plan is one of several options for dealing with the contamination. The EPA will settle on a remedy after hearing from the public, Lyssey said.

A file detailing the cleanup proposals is available at the main library Downtown, 501 Copper NW.

More than 187,000 people get their drinking water from wells within a four-mile radius of the site.

Because the contamination is underground, there's no danger to people who live or work near the former dry-cleaning business, which closed in 1972, according to EPA.

The area was added to the list of Superfund sites in 1999, making it eligible for federal funds.